## **Assignment 7a: Revising the 2009 NSS**

The 2009 National Security Strategy (NSS) you designed has now guided you through some specific policy decisions. As with any strategy, it needs to be updated in light of your experience (i.e., the last eight years of Obama’s Presidency). Because President Obama wants to leave the Executive Branch—and therefore, the next President—on solid footing, he has now requested exactly that.

The President would like you to revisit, review, and revise your 2009 NSS for Cyberspace. Given the ongoing transition between presidential administrations, there will not be time to assemble White Papers, give presentations, and then debate. The NSC will instead meet immediately and begin its deliberations. The questions it needs to address are:

* What should change in the 2009 NSS? Why should it change? How should it change?
* What should *not* change 2009 NSS? Why should it *not* change? How should it *not* change?

The President wants the NSC to submit two final products to him: (i) the revised NSS, and (ii) a cover memo (or executive summary) that answers the above questions, including a brief explanation of the NSC’s thinking for the changes that (do not) occur. He also asks that you remember to preserve a key tension: the President needs a flexible, but concrete, NSS. It needs to guide specific policy responses, even though it cannot foresee all possible, future challenges that might arise. In other words, the NSC should not merely write the NSS to respond *only* to the specific policy challenges the NSC faced in the past (e.g., Stuxnet or the 2016 Presidential elections). Doing so could hinder future flexibility when novel situations arise. At the same time, the NSC likely learned something from past challenges that *can* inform a thoughtful revision of the NSS. The NSC needs to strike that balance—respond appropriately to the past and allow flexibility for the future—while, of course, you also fight for your own institutional prestige and resources.

*Format:*

The NSC will meet under the leadership of its Acting Chairperson.

*Deadline:*

The Gamemaster will provide you with the specific date on which the President expects to receive the final products.

*Essential components*:

* Cover memo, or executive summary of changes / items not changed; and
* A revised NSS, including
  + Executive summary;
  + Identification and explanation of threats; and
  + Policy priorities (i.e., how the country will act and the conditions under which it will do so).

*Examples:*

The following are examples to give you a sense of what a National Security Strategy looks like. You should not merely ‘update’ or ‘borrow heavily’ from these. The general strategies (2000 and 2006) will be too broad, and much has changed since the last (2003) cyberspace document.

* White House. (2003) “The National Security Strategy to Secure Cyberspace.” Available in Repository B.
* White House. (2000) “A National Security Strategy for a Global Age.” Available in Repository B.
* White House. (2006) “The National Security Strategy of the United States of America. Available in Repository B.